

Winter 2010

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MAR 10 2010

the minstrel

*Redeemer University College's
Magazine of Creativity*

Community

ON COMMUNITY

“does this town need a hug? ” Jon Stewart asked Hollywood during 2008’s Oscars. He was commenting on the large number of violent and dark films nominated for awards. I have thought the same about Redeemer after receiving a large number of stories and poems wrestling with the darker sides of imperfect communities.

The theme of community, one would think, should elicit optimistic, happy feelings. I anticipated looking through submissions about fuzzy furred bunnies or smiling people holding hands. Instead they were about the end of the world, the Holocaust, death, and the inevitable fallout that occurs when relationships are broken.

The large volume of dark (or at least sorrow tainted) submissions may cause us to ask this question: what’s wrong with us? As a community of Christians, shouldn’t we have the joy, joy, joy of the Lord down in the depths of our hearts? Can there be any room for sadness when, according to the song, we’re all supposed to be “so happy/ So very happy”?

An understanding of the mixed nature of Creation is key to the Christian faith. Due to The Fall, there is much to weep about. Sin taints our lives and separates us from God and our neighbour. It is only natural, that despite our faith, we will still feel sorrow. If Jesus, our perfect example could weep, then we can too.

However, we don’t mourn as though we have no hope. We wrestle with our brokenness now, knowing that God turns even our pain into something glorious. In the song “Underneath the Door”, Christian artist Michael Card shares how his doctor father would come home from work and lock himself in his study. His father sought peace in solitude, but in so doing, failed to show love to his son, who was deeply hurt by his inattention. At the conclusion of the song, he sings:

*And it’s strange the way we tend to flee
From what we need the most
That a father would lock out a son
When his heart would hold him close
But our wounds are part of who we are
And there is nothing left to chance
And pain’s the pen that writes the songs
And call us forth to dance*

Michael Card realizes the wounds of life are part of who we are as people. It is out of the pain that we are called “forth to dance”.

Likewise, the contributors in this semester’s Minstrel realize that though we don’t like to think about the broken aspects of our community—we need to. Instead of fleeing from each other’s messy lives, we need to embrace them; we cannot know how to best love our neighbour until we know how they suffer.

Some of these contributions cast a painful glance at past breaches of community, like Laura Spoelstra’s “A Clean Sweep”. Some offer a grand, apocalyptic vision of hope mixed with despair, like Greg Hiebert’s “Reach, Please Reach”. And some, like Chris Keefer’s “IRC”, nudge us to consider the difference between liking and loving our neighbours.

Whether sad or happy, provocative or pacifying, I hope the contributions in this issue will help us become better neighbours. To quote Michael Card again, “we love the best by listening/ When we try to understand.”

May we learn to see, listen, understand, and love.

Sincerely,



Peter Frieswick
Senior Editor

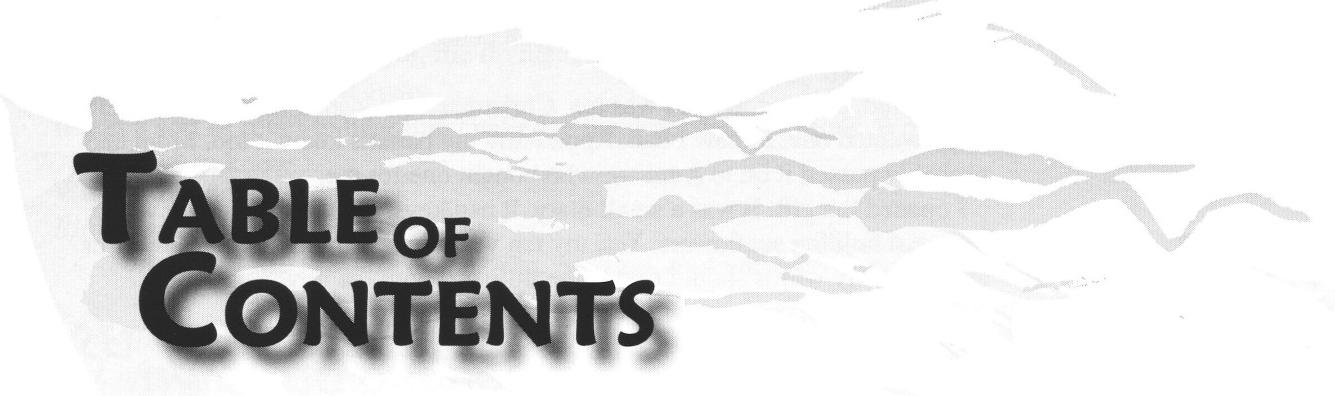


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THE SIXTH JOURNAL

by Brittany Knapper

We run down the rabbit hole with no end, no beginning. Where

did it come from?

Short prose. It's not that I don't have much to say, though often, I'd rather not say anything at all. Observations of a world that is filled with the quietest of desperation. It seems poetic, doesn't it? Once, I'm sure, it was. But then again, once, men were not islands unto themselves.

Eight years later, I sat in my twelfth grade course on writing. The teacher was a larger man. He looked like John Goodman with a curled lip and squinting eyes. My friend described him as a big, ugly, angry, oaf of a man. This was probably true, except for the angry bit. He had a sour disposition about him, though not necessarily angry. I think the world may have wronged him, and that wrong sat in his soul even then. His classroom (and I call it his, because the room truly did belong to him. It was his own artistic muse, and we were his proteges) had a poster that hung above his desk. It wasn't one of those posters with wise words about academics, and succeeding. His poster was of Rene Magritte's painting of a pipe. The words '*ceci n'est pas une pipe*' were across the bottom of the painting. In English, they read, 'this is not a pipe.' Beside the poster he had taped up a black circle. It was cut from construction paper. Beside that, he had three dried maple leaves. Each of us have our own recurring metaphors, he told us. I supposed that was true.

I moved through 5 journals in those years, or maybe they were diaries. I don't know if it matters which word I use. It's all the same to me now.

The second one was pink. It had a lock and a key. It had a picture of labrador puppies on the front.

The third one was also pink. I don't even like pink, really. No lock. Instead, it came with a pen, and Bible verses on the bottom of each page. The pages, too, were pink.

The fourth one had a red ribbon page marker. It was brown. It had a magnetic closing. I really liked the extra compartment that was included in the back. Buried treasure must exist in that one.

The fifth one was brown with deep red binding. It had a picture of a map and compass on the front.

And then, I stopped journaling.

This is not a pipe. This is not a poster. This is not a journal.

There are pieces of our lives that become lost in the pages of time. It becomes inevitable. The memories disappear. You forget why it is you wrote that story of tears. You forget why the stone couldn't talk. You forget which sock it is that you left on the floor. It's not the same as forgiveness though. Be sure.

Somewhere in the middle of the semester, I found out that teacher was a Christian. Christians can be sour too.

Write every day, he told me. Write it down. But I don't want to hear you bitch. Christians can swear.

The fifth journal came with me to Mexico. It came 3 times over the course of 2 years. Maybe the atlas and compass were appropriate. I didn't realize the irony in it at the time. I don't know if I fully recognize it now. But I don't open it. It sits on the bookshelf at the end of my bed. It's closed. I'm hoping if I leave it long enough, it will be dead to me.

But then, is the past ever really dead?

I read somewhere once, that each human being is a profound mystery to every other.

It started, perhaps, when I was ten. Christmas, that year- I remember it well. I had wanted one, I knew I had. Apparently my parents knew it too. Mom had probably passed it on to Aunt ---, who bought one for me.

I opened the gift. It was a small diary. It had keys. On the front cover was a little girl holding sunflowers. Yes, my ten year old self thought, this is what its all about. My words should reflect the little girl with the flowers.

Go past conventional wisdom.

go past

the status quo.

We are children of the enlightenment.

We see through a glass darkly.

**"each of us
have our own
recurring
metaphors"**

**"I don't want
to hear you
bitch.
Christians can
swear."**

If it was, I guess we would be missing an entire division in the Humanities. If it was, we wouldn't have political disputes, competing cultures, the divide. Perhaps it's a big claim, and now that I think about it, the idea was a stupid one, and I throw it away.

It was a sort of relief to hear him challenge me. I needed it, I think. Write against the culture, he told me.
Write what you know.
What did I know?

Blind, only because

*the fallen world doesn't recognize, perhaps, that not everything
is a reflection*

of itself.

And, of course, frustration. An intentional misspelling.

I knew that I knew nothing. But, I knew faith. I suppose that is not nothing.

It was that summer that I stood in front of the church. The proceedings were simple. My heart was sincere. Then, the 'I do's' were over. The 'God helping me' lingered. It lingers still. It lingers in the quiet desperations. It lingers in profound mysteries. It lingers in five journals.

It lingers too, in the words written. It lingers in the sour, the ugly, the oaf. It lingers even here.

The last words in the journal were an elegy. It was then I realized how truly fragile life is. Funny thing was, I don't know if I cared. I certainly didn't cry over it. The tears disappeared with the pages of time. But it wasn't forgetting.

I went back to his classroom. Days before the last entry, months even, I went back. I stood at the door of his classroom. I looked over his next set of proteges. Eager and confused eyes listening intently to every word that he said. Write what you know. Write every day. This is not a pipe. I felt like Alice standing in front of the looking glass. I still do. I don't think he saw me standing there.

Each human being is a profound mystery to every other.

She wanted one. She told Aunt ---. Aunt --- told my Mom. My Mom told me. I bought one for her. Birds singing on flowers, a yellowed background, brightly coloured design. It closed magnetically. Her ten-year old self exclaimed, my words should reflect the colourful birds and the flowers.

“each
human
being is a
profound
mystery to
every
other.”

BRITTANY KNAPPER is a
Second Year
English Honours Major
She writes:

“This story is a collection of memories. It deals with questions, moments and struggles. Through the tidbits of memory, pieced together in the way they were, I hoped to reveal community through generations and influences in our lives. A design, crafted to support John Donne’s words, ‘no man is an island unto himself,’ where life experiences and faith are at the heart of what binds us together. And this story, designed to pull the short memories, though insignificant alone, as a coherent whole, a sixth journal.”

tepid season

“ un
Certain, winter postulates fatality
,and implores to comply puddles
to its promiscuous languid temperatures:
in
to
slow
ly harden like a learned man’s e
motion.
sedate fields, just harvested,
still(.)
to forgotten morsels
scabbed and molded in
to cr
e a
sEd
tissue, tasteless.
saluting overgrown skeletons
slushy precipitation, (well)-
come, to no avail BLANK
eting pimply lawns,
andASSAILing plastic goblets discarded.
im

migrant glaze s
1 i
t
he
r
s
in
to
in
toxic
ated ditches, bloated,
under a chorus of clouds,
January wanders in.

TAYLOR KRAAYENBRINK is a
First Year History and
English major.

He writes:

“I have always enjoyed poetry, but I usually only wrote it when I was melancholy or emotionally distraught. Since coming to Redeemer and studying English literature in much more depth, I have realized that poetry is much more than an emotional outlet. It can teach, delight, stimulate, and motivate. Poetry is the creative use of language, and I agree with W.H. Auden, who said a poet must be in love with language.”

irc

by Chris Keefer

Now arriving at... Eglinton West." The subway train shuddered to a stop, forgotten newspapers fluttering end over end past the aisles, joining the pop cans, broken bottles and discarded candy wrappers that filled the empty spaces. There were a lot of these, a thousand tiny alcoves outlined in gray, behind and under empty seats and in dirty, graffiti-ridden corners, in all the stark shadows cast by the flickering florescence overhead.

A rolling newspaper wrapped itself around Simon's foot as the subway train doors opened dutifully onto empty platforms. Most of the lights in the station beyond were off - only the bare minimum of service lights remained, and the glaring red digits of the platform display, cycling endlessly between time and temperature.

Simon glanced away from his laptop to consider his new shoe ornament with tired eyes. It was the 24, a free news rag rife with the usual - crime rates up, stock prices down, celebrity gossip, etcetera. He kicked it off into a corner, where it joined a crumpled energy drink can and an empty box of condoms. The soft tri-tone of the last subway train of the night sounded, the doors slid shut, and with a jerk the subway train sped onwards.

Simon was already oblivious to it all again, his fingers clicking stolidly against his laptop's keyboard. His work schedule wasn't well suited for traditional social events, and those few times he had company on the late ride home, they had both fastidiously avoided anything approaching eye contact, let alone communication. Even though he might otherwise welcome it - it was a long ride from one end of the Downsview-Finch loop to the other - 2 AM was no time to make friends. At least, not on a subway train, perhaps not anywhere in the so-called Real World; but outside that tiny bubble of 'reality', his fellow insomniacs, of choice or necessity, would fill in the social gaps.

wIRC

```
<Sym0n [n=SimonChung@12.24.168.30.dd1.cerc.ca] connected to
irc.gw.net>
<Sym0n has joined #GW>
<chanBot> Good morning Sym0n [Simon Chung]! The time right
now is: 1:43AM EST. Today's inspirational quote: One should
always take time to smell both the fish and the flowers, in
order to appreciate either. --Anon
<Fr0g> So, it's like... a weight on the universe, see? It
kind of bends the fabric of the universe inwards on it.
<Fr0g> Oh, hey Sym0n.
<Time4Mime> Hey, Symi! Slummin' it in the IRC channels again,
I see! :D
<NoName> Sym0n! You're just in time.
<Sym0n> Hey Fr0g, Time, he of NoName. :) Just in time for
what?
<NoName> Why, the late, late, late, late, late, etc, ad
absurdum, late show! Featuring such incredible entertainment
options as a pithy summary of black hole physics by our
resident mad scientist, Fr0g! Soon to be followed up with
Lolcats and random Monty Python quotes! :P
<Sym0n> Lol.
```

Users:
@Sane
chanBot
Fr0g
Time4Mime
LordSaiyaMan
NoName
P03T
InigoMontoya
LiVe
Raven
Sym0n

Simon didn't really 'lol', of course - even the empty subway car felt like too public a place to break out in spontaneous laughter, and the tinny echo of it would be a little unnerving this late at night. He felt it inside, though - the humour, and the more subtle but equally appreciated warmth that comes from human contact -

even if through the intermediaries of keyboard and screen.

The IRC (Internet Relay Chat) system was something of a dinosaur, one of the first real-time ‘chat room’ style communication protocols. Many people had moved on to other technologies, and more had never even known that IRC existed. With other technologies, instant messaging for instance, one could control the list of contacts so they’d never have to speak to someone they didn’t already know; and Facebook and similar social networking sites were all about accumulating ‘friends’, for a given value of the word. Simon didn’t particularly begrudge either group their choices, but he preferred IRC. Each chat room, or ‘channel’, could contain any number of people, some of whom you knew, and some of those you actually liked. It was a mixed bag, just like any real life social gathering. Popular channels contained the whole gamut of personalities - and when considering the Internet, that was a significantly broader range than in the physical world. Some people tended toward cultivating an online persona for themselves, a sort of role-playing in conversation, while others were more honest and forthcoming than in real life; and, of course, when the possibility of getting a kick in the nuts for being a jerk was removed, some people tended to be jerks in inventive new ways.

“Now arriving at... St.George.” The doors whooshed open, closed, and the train continued on. Simon barely registered it, his eyes following the flow of text, his fingers dancing across the keys as he traded witticisms, shop-talk and the events of the day. Any well-populated IRC channel was a chaos of interleaving conversations, a soundless euphony, and the channel operator (denoted by an ‘@’ sign next to his name) generally endeavoured to keep it that way. The only time one topic could dominate the channel was when it was something big - and, usually, bad.

wIRC

<P03T> Woe the black hole that is Life. It sucks us dry, and leaves us, a husk in the dark. No Light, no Purpose.	Users:
<Fr0g> Actually, the pre-played games are mostly a rip-off - they make like 200% profit on those things. I'd rather try eBay .	@Sane chanBot Fr0g Time4Mime LordSaiyaMan
<InigoMontoya> Hello.	NoName P03T InigoMontoya
<Time4Mime> P03T, stop being so depressing. Life's not that bad. I'm pretty fond of it, actually. :)	LiVe Raven
<Raven> No, P03T's right. I know that's how I'm feeling. This night, and most nights...	Sym0n
<InigoMontoya> My name is Inigo Montoya.	
<NoName> No kidding.	
<InigoMontoya> You killed my father.	
<Sym0n> Really? Awesome. I wasn't even trying.	
<NoName> Yes. Yes I did. I only wish I had done so earlier. Say, at least... hey, Inigo, how old are you? Yeah, that many years ago.	
<LordSaiyaMan> so anybody seen that new action movie with the ninjas it looks like its really good does anybody know?!	
<NoName> Hey, Sane, we need some admin action here, please. This guys just been repeating the same quote over and over.	
** NoName pokes Sane with a standard-issue ten foot pole.	
<InigoMontoya> Prepare to die.	
** InigoMontoya has been kicked from this channel by Sane (Death threats and overused quotes are strictly prohibited)	
<Sane> Sorry, my daughter has an ear infection, so I'm kind of juggling channel op duties with father duties here.	
Anything else I need to attend to?	
<Raven> I'm going to kill myself.	
** Raven has left #GW	
<NoName> Ummm... that?	

Simon blinked hard, twice, and sat back. He'd heard about suicide threats before - forums, IRC, Facebook, they all suffered them. Mostly, though, they were just attempts to gain attention. Which was probably all this was, too. Of course. He hoped.

Meanwhile, the channel buzzed like a disturbed hornet's nest. Maybe some channels got a dozen suicide threats a day, but this was a first for Simon, and judging from their reactions, for most of the channel-goers. Most of them were inclined to dismiss it, or even laugh. The prevailing attitude was 'not my problem', and Simon felt himself borne upon it, even making a joke at the expense of the 'emo kid'.

wIRC

<Sym0n> How many emo kids does it take to change a lightbulb? Three - one to change it, and two to write poetry about how much they miss the old one.	Users: @Sane chanBot Fr0g Time4Mime LordSaiyaMan NoName P03T LiVe Sym0n
<NoName> Lol.	
<Fr0g> Heh.	
<Time4Mime> That's not very nice. :(
<P03T> Mockery is the refuge of the small-minded.	
<NoName> Guess you found yourself there often then, eh P03T?	
<Sane> That's enough. I'm disappointed in you guys.	
<Fr0g> I didn't say anything!	
<Sane> I never said you did, Fr0g; I just want to make it clear this isn't funny. Someone just said they were going to kill themselves. Maybe its a joke, or someone hoping for attention, but I'm not going to assume that. Obviously, you're all free to do what you want, but I'm going to try and keep a member of our community alive.	
<Sane> If you'd like to help, I'd appreciate it.	
<NoName> Eh, I don't much care for Raven - but since its you asking, Sane, I'm in.	
<Time4Mime> Phew, finally. :/ I'm glad you're taking this seriously, Sane! :D	
<Fr0g> Okay. But what can we do?	
<Sane> I've got Raven's IP address, and I can map that to an approximate physical location, but that's about it. Does anyone here live in Toronto?	
<P03T> No, I'm in New York. Sorry if this is my fault. The poetry just for, well, fun, you know? Its just something I do. I didn't mean for anyone to die over it...	
<Sane> No point assigning blame. Still looking for people in Toronto. What about you, NoName? Fr0g? Time?	
<NoName> Nope, Ottawa. Maybe we could call the police?	
<Fr0g> I'm up in Hillsport.	
<Time4Mime> Sorry, I'm in the UK.	
<Sym0n> I'm in Toronto, on the subway in fact. Where do I go?	

"you didn't
have to like
your neighbours,
but by God, if their
house was on fire,
you got out there and joined the bucket chain"

Simon was almost surprised to see himself write that. From mockery to mercy in a couple of minutes; but Sane knew the magic word, the one that birthed civilizations and maintained them. Community. It meant a sort of love, a kind of extended family - you didn't have to like your neighbours, but by God, if their house was on fire, you got out there and joined the bucket chain. And maybe if someone in an IRC channel said they were going

to kill themselves, you at least checked up on them if you could. Sane, armed with the latitude and longitude provided by Raven's IP address, put it through a web site that converted it to a street address, and typed that address into the IRC channel. Simon quickly pasted the address into Google maps.

wIRC

<Sym0n> Okay, Raven's house is on Elm, off of Yonge street. I'll get off at Dundas and take the bus. <Sym0n> Wait, that bus isn't running at this time of night. I'll have to run it. <LordSaiyaMan> wait dude theres another way I live up in Scarborough but I know theres a bike-share place up at Dundas <Sym0n> Bike-share? <LordSaiyaMan> yah you just leave a deposit like some id or something and you can take a bike its open 24 hours <Sym0n> Right, getting off the Subway now. Thanks Saiya man. <LordSaiyaMan> No prob <NoName> Alright, I've got the Toronto police on the line. What should I say? <Time4Mime> Good luck, Symi! ** Sym0n has left #GW	Users: @Sane chanBot Fr0g Time4Mime LordSaiyaMan NoName P03T LiVe Sym0n
---	--

Simon stumbled up the escalator stairs two at a time, cursing incoherently at his laptop bag, strap clenched between his teeth, as he wrestled his computer back in with one hand, the other hand dragging a back-pack stuffed with work clothes and the remains of his dinner. The red glare of the platform display was the only illumination as he stumbled out of the terminal. 1:57 AM, it told him. He looked up and down the street, cursing. This was Toronto - that bike-share could be hidden in an alley, or at the back of a strip mall, he'd never find it in time! 4°C, the display informed him. Dammit, where the hell was - wait, there!

Slinging both bags over his shoulders, he sprinted the half block to the bike share, slapped down something - in his rush, he wasn't sure what exactly, and could only imagine what the man would do if he had handed him a book of stamps - and was on a dented blue mountain bike a moment later, pedaling for all he was worth. Yonge, to Elm... to the address that turned out to be the Hospital for Sick Children. Alright, unexpected, but we'll deal. Ditch the bike, through the doors, past the stunned faces floating above white lab coats and blue security jackets, to the first desk you see, and panting, spill your story...

As it turned out, NoName - Hideki Katsuo, to the real world - managed to pass the message along to the police, who in turn passed it to the hospital, a few minutes before Simon had arrived. The nurses had caught Raven - Kimberly Laston - crying in the computer room, her wheelchair and IV at one end of the room while she laid crumpled at the other. "She probably wouldn't have died," the nurse told Simon as they climbed yet another set of stairs, "but she could have done herself a lot of damage, especially since the computer room is one of the last places we normally would have thought to look for her." Simon decided that what he was feeling was the warm glow of satisfaction, and not the what-the-hell-were-you-thinking agonies of a very tired body coming off an adrenalin rush.

Compounding that was Simon's worry that, along with being late as a messenger, he'd prove useless as a comforter. He knew hardly anything about her, since he and Raven had not talked all that much - and more often than not, he realized with a pang, he'd been critical of her love for poetry. He almost turned away, but a small female voice called to him from within the room.

"Simon?" It said, but it sounded more like 'Sym0n', somehow. As he pushed the door open, a smile pulled at his lips, and he found one on the girl's face as well. "Hey, Simon. Sorry 'bout bringing you out in the middle of the night like this."

"spill
your
story..."

Simon sat down beside her bed, and pulled his laptop out. "Well, just don't make a habit of it, eh? Now... everyone's worried about you, even our glum resident poet. How about we log on and let them know what's up?" Kimberly smiled. "Okay."

CHRIS KEEFER is a
Fourth Year Political Science
and Computer Science Major.
He writes:

"Community is possessed of a variety of forms - from the smallest family unit to the largest empire, encompassing and interacting with one another in sometimes surprising ways. It is inherent in human nature to form communities, and with the advent of communication via the Internet - itself a community of communities - comes new opportunities for humans to bond in community, joined in part by technology, and in part by the sentiment and support that have created and sustained Human communities since time immemorial. IRC involves itself with one such community, loosely based in the experiences of the author."

Slowly she gains composure,
huddled over canvas;
Dark shades and angular

Pieces lay dormant
against cement;
bunched and rough stone.

Paint resembles thought,
through and through;
felt and experienced.

Wise help with words,
most often said;
expressed and misleading.

If at all, commission paid
in unwanted currency;
seldom and far between.

Work would be appreciated
as well as self;
contained and type b.

If they only knew,
things might change;
potential and longing.

“ ”
PIECES

KRYSTAL BALLAD is a
Second Year English major
and Religion & Theology minor.

She writes:

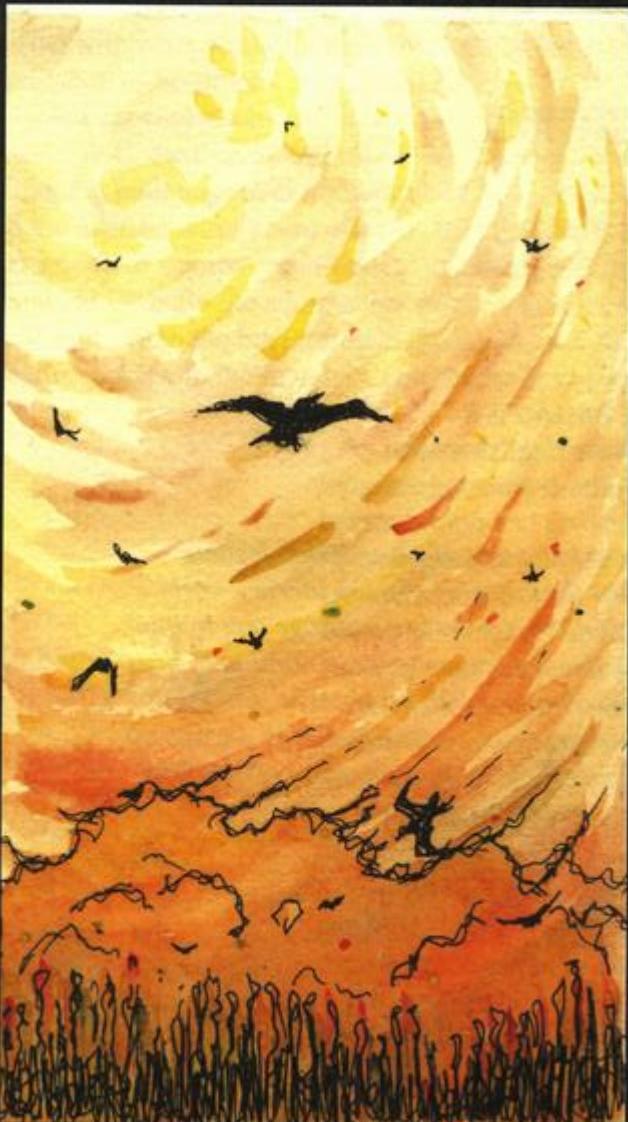
"I have made a point of never spoon feeding my readers the meaning of each literary work. What I would like to do is encourage you to think about the theme of community in relation to this work, in community with others. The arts should not only be enjoyed in solitude. Let us engage all of the submissions in this collection of beautiful stories and poetry."

TYLER VANHOLST is a Third
Year Arts major.

“Danger”

▼
January 5/10
Watercolor and Ink
5x8

When birds sense danger, they spread out and circle. Despite fear, they stay together and this makes it difficult for a predator to attack. To flee the flock means certain death.



.a Good Dream.

▲ June 8/09

Watercolor and Ink

5x7

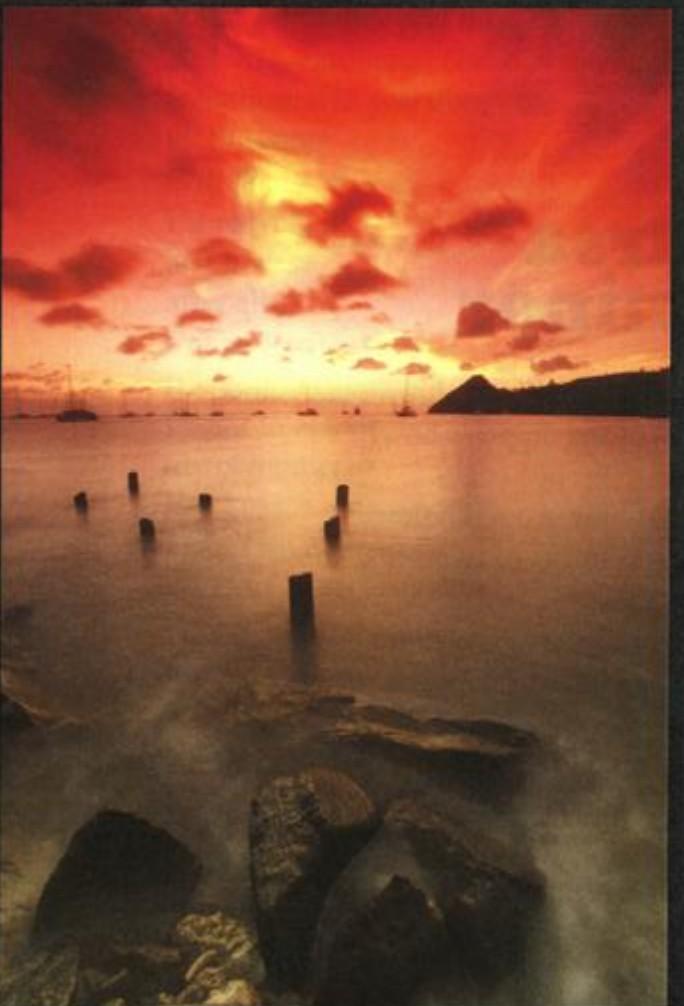
You and I were in a bright house. It was old, with many large windows that were letting in pure and warm sunlight. The house (our house) was filled with old couches, chairs and friends. Good souls were sitting everywhere, on floors, seats, tables, chatting about everything. We moved from room to room together through many doors. There was a cleanly made bed upstairs that we woke up from, the sheets were white and there was two end tables on either side. On the end tables there were things like old lamps, wristwatches, other small jewelry, and a clock, but I didn't look at the time. There was one room that had a lot of old, fun stuff in it that we didn't want to get rid of and we were telling stories about some of the things. The world was just revolving right, the atmosphere was clear and love, fellowship, friendship, and warmth was

Sunset on Rodney Bay.

60 sec, f/22, ISO 100, 11mm,
GND Lee filter 0.9 softv
Digital Print

"The unique sense of community found throughout the Caribbean gives most Canadian visitors an unforgettable experience. The relaxed atmosphere and friendly people provide a stark contrast against the everyday urban bustle most North Americans are used to. In St. Lucia specifically, crowds of locals gather on weekend evenings to BBQ, relax on the beaches, and enjoy the sunset. While I was visiting the island, I went for an evening walk, made my way through the partying locals, and found a quiet spot that I thought suitable to capture the movement of water, sailboats, and beautiful sunset."

JOEL SJAARDA is a
Fourth Year English Honours and History Major



“Idolatry”

Digital print

“Idolatry, as the title suggests, is an act of community. If community is something shared, then idolatry is a part of this as well. Not only can idolatry be caused by the community around us, as in peer pressure, but the act of idolatry can create community. Strangers can be drawn together in the act of worshipping a celebrity, such as Napoleon (whose tomb is what lies beyond the doors) or any number of false gods, half-truths and seemingly inanimate objects like money. Thus not only positive things, but negative things draw us together.”

GREG HIEBERT is a
Third Year History Honours Major.

Gideon's Winepress

ursa minor

When Winter throws the whole
of the dipper's bowl

to the ground below
in forms of twinkling snow

and stars descend to ground
(without the angels' sound),

a child escapes her mother's hold
and finds stars are not hot—but cold.

JAN KOREVAAR is a
Fourth Year Social Studies
major. He writes:

*"Sometimes the bond of
community can restrict
us from discovery and
exploration. Innocently
leaving the comfort, she
sees things that she has not
seen before, the common
perceptions broken, and
she discovers something
new."*

We are the homeless here: held captive
in silence, and unwanted; taunted.
they jibe “so where is your God now?”
We sit by muddy gutters fed
by our tears. Truth? It trickles, mute,
from flick’ring streetlamps, and our songs
-- our songs?...as if the dumb could sing.
‘Sons of the morning’ no more, we’re
children of mourning, longing that
we could remember every ray
of light that used to dance in Zion,
before this doubt assailed our hearts.
How can we sing the songs of Truth
‘like no one else is listening’,
when spiteful Edom waits to laugh?
Assailed on every side -- if I
forget you, oh Jerusalem!
better to lose my tongue outright --
by those with ready answers, whose
delight is catching us off-guard.

JOEL FABER is a Fourth Year
English Honours major. He writes:
*“Gideon’s Winepress is a personal
paraphrase of the first half of Psalm
137, written after a semester spent
with classmates struggling to under-
stand and evaluate unfamiliar ways of
thinking. It captures one possible side
of being a community of Christian
scholars in an unfriendly academic
context. The haiku is a sketch of a ma-
jor piece of our lives as students, and
playful in its ironic economy.”*

haiku

playing-card houses
our fragile scaffolds of thought
painstakingly built

EcoWarrior (and Wimp)

EMILY WILLIAMS is a
Fourth Year English
Honours and History major

"This poem came out of my thoughts about the relationship between the individual and the environment. I wonder how we are to live as Christian members of the environmental community, especially considering that our actions will affect not only those in other parts of the world, but also those to come in future generations. Are the little things we do, like recycling, composting etc., are they really enough, or are there bigger lifestyle changes that we ought to make (like forgoing a car, consuming less, going out of our way to shop locally)? How far does the gospel require us to go?"

If I don't recycle this 1L cardboard chocolate milk container, will you disappear in 30 years?
Will I?
I'll recycle it just in case, after all,
I'm an EcoWarrior.
If it matters so much, I want to compost my computer.
But I can't.
I can't save the trees, the Corporate "They" have a permit.
So will my grandchildren be surrounded by fields? Or landfills? Will yours see nothing but Industrial Parks?
Where do old cars go when they die?
But I can't live without one, I live in the country.
If I buy fruit from Fiji, and meat from Minnesota what will the farmers down the road do?
But Kiwi-fruit, that sounds exotic.
Should I go without my Kiwi? It won't really make a difference... I think.
Is this "cardboard" chocolate milk container cardboard? It seems like plastic on the outside.
Which bin does it go in?
Will it make that much of a difference to "us"?

This tree
Became a perfumed fortress in the fall;
Trapped the honeyed scent
Of bruised fruit and forgotten chestnuts
Between the scales of old bark.

This tree
Became a patient beggar in the winter;
We saw its crooked limbs outstretched
Branches curled like bony hands
Eager to catch the sky's powdered offering of new snow.

This tree
Became a generous gift giver in the spring;
Dropped relics of twigs and straw at its feet
Shed red-tipped, yellow-bellied leaves
As if to say thank you to passing visitors.

This tree
Became a blushing bride in the summer;
Origami tokens blossomed in white clusters
From green fingertips.
Veiled limbs freckled grass with shade.

In August we press our oily palms against its cool, sturdy trunk
Leaves mutter in a hushed symphony above our heads
Roots drink deep.
Memories of forgotten seasons uncurl with each dimming leaf.

tree.

LAURA KONYNDYK
is a Third Year English
major.

"This poem wasn't meant to be especially 'deep' or complex. That's not really what I was going for. I just wanted to play with language and celebrate the life of an ordinary but very lovely part of creation. In the same way a tree changes with the seasons, we too play different roles at various stages in our lives. I also used the image of a tree to explore how our identities are often shaped by the community around us."

IN BETWEEN

"In Between is a poem that plays with the idea of memory loss, as well as the idea of reclaiming memory and how that could offer someone a sense of relief and freedom.

Our memories are an indispensable part of our identities.

When they fade, we lose a part of ourselves. This poem is about waiting for things to be set right again. I hope you enjoyed reading it!"

-L.K.

She said she had trouble holding thoughts for as long as she'd like now they could only wriggle like insects - surface for seconds from beneath wet bark and then burrow back down under brown rubble

Her friends assume that in heaven these memories will fill out again -- that life will wear a sweater, and she will wrap her arms around it

But maybe, this reclaiming of memory will feel more like wrestling off a tight leather coat and feeling the breeze pass unrestricted, for the first time – over fresh, freckled arms

Perhaps it will feel like pulling water from the crack of a rock, drawing more than just childhood from a cold, clogged space

Or,
proudly lifting a net heavy with fish from the lake
and emptying it - onto a hot, dry dock

Someday, forgotten faces will linger like new dust on old surfaces.

For now, years, phrases and names have lodged themselves under the accidental gatherings of pebbles

Time sleeps stubbornly, under the soft, silent world of a mind decomposing month by month.

Leaves, once yellow kites for light to pass through have landed, and simply wait.

GORILLA WARFARE

by Peter Frieswick

Richard Adderly awoke to the cold of small feet pressed against his legs. He lay still for a moment, then rolled over to face his wife.

"Honey, do you feel something in the bed?" he asked.

"I don't know," she said with a yawn, and winked at him. In between them lay their eight-year-old son, Ben, whose dark eyes glittered in the pale morning light. The boy silently watched to see what he would do.

"Maybe it's nothing." He winked at her, and rolled back on his side.

Cold feet touched his legs again and he turned over once more.

"That's funny." He looked confused. "I don't see anything in the bed, but I feel something."

Ben slid the blanket over his head and giggled.

Richard sat up and poked his son through the blankets. "Maria, there's something in our bed!" he cried.

"Oh, no!" she moaned. "Whatever could it be?"

"I don't know," Richard whispered hoarsely. "But it might be a monster."

Ben giggled some more.

"It is a monster." Richard poked the shaking lump again. "It is a Giggle-Monster!" He flung off the blankets and frowned at his son in mock rage. "Let's get him!"

Ben shrieked in delight and squirmed about wildly as his Richard and his wife tickled him.

Afterwards they lay breathless on the bed.

"You're in a good mood, this morning," Maria said.

"Today is going to be a good day," Richard replied.

...

After breakfast, Richard let Ben push the buttons in the high-rise's brass-plated elevator. "Down we go," he said.

In the lobby, the elevator door opened and the boy hurried out and bumped into a white-haired doorman. "Good morning, Mr. Ben," the doorman said.

"What's up, Doc?" the boy replied.

"Heh! You're getting cheeky."

The doorman patted him on the head. "You must not be taking your vitamins."

"I'm too big for those. I'm going to be King of the Jungle just like my dad," he said, and stomped his foot to prove it.

The doorman looked up and smiled. "Your car is just outside, Mr. Adderly."

Richard ushered his son toward the revolving door. "Thanks, Henry."

...

As he was pulling out of Our Lady of the Assumption Primary School, his cell phone rang.

"Adderly speaking."

"You didn't take your medicine again," Maria said.

"I'm not going to die if I miss a dose," he joked.

She was silent.

"I'm sorry, Honey," he said. "I forgot. I'll get it when I come

home."

"Are you sure you feel fine?"

He could hear the worry in her voice.

"I feel better than ever."

She sighed. "I love you."

"I love you too. See you tonight."

Richard hung up and turned right on Bleeker Street, which he stayed on till he made a shortcut through a section of the city he nicknamed G-Town. Here he was disturbed to have to stop at an intersection where six young male gorillas sat in a parked truck. Four of them sat in the back smoking cigarettes and sipping on beers. The other two leaned out the window, bobbing their heads to a hideous rap song: "Black man came first in the sweet name of Jesus. Cost me a Dollar, at the flo' of

Creflo. Like how the hell he supposed to know or see to ask..."

One of the gorillas gave Richard a

nasty look, and poked his friend. They both leered at his car, and he instinctively felt for the power locks. He also noticed with disgust a police officer on the opposite corner, prudently looking the other way.

He gritted his teeth and tried to ignore them. New York had been infested with gorillas for as long as he could remember. They were the kind of lowlifes that hid themselves on airplanes or washed ashore on rafts. Social Services and the Department of Immigration would find them lost and snivelling, usually malnourished, and sometimes bearing whip marks. "Look how desperate they are," his wife had told him once, when they watched a report about the gorilla situation on CNN. "Everyone's desperate to make

a buck," he had responded.

Richard wasn't fooled. Before he knew Maria, a gorilla had grabbed him in Central Park and clubbed him with a metal pipe before taking his wallet. He felt little sympathy for creatures that probably starved and whipped themselves to get attention.

In the distant past, pitiful as they were, most of these derelicts were sent back where they belonged. But as the political climate changed and international attention focused on the animal refugees, New York drew on its rich history of welcoming the poor and dispossessed, and opened its arms to its dark-haired brothers and sisters from across the sea, or wherever it was they came from. They were given their own section of the projects, where the Chinese and Jews had previously lived when Ellis Island still functioned as a gateway into America.

Over time the gorillas had taken advantage of their host city's generosity, and brought their friends and relatives to New York. The projects swelled and then overflowed into other districts. The gorillas brought down the property values wherever they went, spreading their filth, and worse, their way life. They were indifferent to acceptable social norms, shuffling about in groups, all of them grunting in their guttural languages and pointing at things without appearing to comprehend anything. They cluttered the sidewalks, ignored traffic signals, and rarely respected authority.

The police were useless. After he was mugged, two officers visited him in his hospital room and showed him a stack of suspect photos.

"I don't know," he said at last, when he had looked through all the dark-faced photos. "All gorillas look the same."

"Gorillas?" the officer holding the mug shots asked.

"They're impossible to tell apart," he said, and leaned back in bed.

The officer looked into Richard's eyes. "There are no gorillas in these pictures."

"Yes, there are," he said.

The officer glanced at the large bandage that covered his head, then began putting away the photos. "We'll come back at a better time," he said.

Richard did not understand why they refused to acknowledge what he could so plainly see. He tried to explain the injustice of this to friends, and to Maria after their marriage, but everyone awkwardly changed the subject until he learned to keep it to himself. It was only after watching a series on ABC's Nightline that he realized why: popular media made it politically incorrect to point out flaws in members of the Endangered Species List.

When the light turned green, Richard hit the gas pedal hard. As he sped away the cab radio aggressively blared: In the name of Allah, runnin to the radio. And the TV issues and views shaped by one-sided news. Got us like Planet of the Apes under CD's and tapes...

"There are NO
gorillas in these
pictures."
"Yes, there are."

...

After dinner, Richard and Maria washed the dishes while Ben lay on the living room floor, colouring.

"How was your meeting?" Maria asked, handing him a bowl to dry.

"The same as usual," he said.

"That bad?"

"I have a killer headache that's not going away."

"That's too bad," she murmured.

"So, what do you want to do this weekend?"

"Do we have to do anything?" he asked. "Why don't we stay in? Just the three of us."

Maria dipped her hand into the sink. "I was thinking we could go to the park."

"We could do that, but I was hoping to stay here with you." He slid his arm around her waist.

Maria turned to him. "The park's not dangerous, Richard."

"I never said it was," he said, letting go of her. "I just don't like it there."

"Because you don't think it's safe."

"It's not." he waved his drying towel around while he thought of an adequate word. "It's not nice there. I think we might like to go somewhere else instead."

They washed the dishes in silence until Richard snapped his towel at her. "You know, we could always get a maid to do this," he said.

"Yes, we could." She leaned close. "But then I wouldn't be able to do this!" She scooped a handful of suds onto his head.

"You!" Richard wiped the foam off. "Here. Take it back!" He put it on her nose.

Maria gasped. "This means war!"

"Look what I drew," Ben said as he walked into the room. He held up his picture.

"That's very pretty," Maria said,

bending to examine it. "I like your colours. They're very vivid."

"What did you draw, Little Man?" Richard smiled.

"This is Mom." He circled a lady with yellow hair with his finger.
"And this is me on the Monkey Bars."

"What about me? Where am I?"

"You never go to the park."

Richard stared down at the picture. "What's that black thing next to you, Ben?"

The boy looked up at his mother, who shook her head at him, and then at him.

"Nothing."

"Let me see that," Richard said, and grabbed the paper from his son's hands.

"It isn't anything." She tried to pull it away from him. "It's just a drawing."

"No." He pulled it back. "This is not just a drawing." He pointed to the black figure. "I know what this is."

"Dad—"

"No," he said bitterly. "You were playing with a gorilla."

"Please, Rich, you're being ridiculous," Maria said.

"It's Omar," Ben said.

"You named a gorilla?" He glared at his son.

"Richard," Maria said, reaching for him. "Did you take your medication when you came home?"

"You named a goddamn gorilla!" he shouted, shaking Ben.

Maria grabbed at her husband. "Let go!" she screamed. "You're hurting him!"

Richard dropped his son in order to grapple with his

wife. Ben curled into a ball on the floor and covered his ears.

"You let our son play with a gorilla!" His face flushed crimson.

"He's not a gorilla!" she shouted back. "He's Ben's friend! And what if he was? What's the big fucking deal with you and gorillas?"

"Maria," he let go of her and grabbed at his head. "They comb fruhm Afrika. Ther' not human." He staggered back and put his arm out for support and missed the refrigerator.

"Ther' not ev'n sihvulaased," he slurred as he toppled over.

...

White, bright light seared his consciousness as his left eyelid was forced open. His pupil dilated and the left side of his face twitched.

"He's awake now," a voice said in a thick, British accent.

His eyelid dropped. In the darkness he could hear a strange hissing noise that rose and fell with his chest. He also heard the click-click of high heels on tile and hushed voices in a faraway hall. He tried to talk but discovered something hard jammed in his mouth. He tried to move, but only managed to raise his left hand. A soft, feminine hand grabbed his and squeezed.

"Richard," he heard the woman say. "Can you open your eyes, Honey?"

His left eye opened again slightly. A woman leaned in and kissed him on the head. When she drew back, he noticed the rims of her eyes were red and swollen. On either side she was framed by aquamarine cloth. "If you can hear me, squeeze my hand," she said.

Squeeze.

"You had a severe stroke, Richard," she said slowly. "Dr. Chuk-wueneka saved your life."

His one eye suddenly noticed a blackish-brown figure in a white coat. It loomed behind the woman. "Excuse me for a moment," the doctor said, changing places with the woman. "Hello, Mr. Adderly. You are a very lucky man." The doctor reached forward and lightly adjusted a dial on the hard, transparent tube that ran out of his mouth. His eye expanded as he realized the doctor's hand was dark brown. He looked up. He was staring into the face of a short gorilla wearing glasses.

"It's Omar," Ben said. "You named a gorilla?"

PETER FRIESWICK
is a Fourth Year English Honours
Major and Theatre Major.

He writes:

"Gorilla Warfare is about how we view people who are different from us. It examines the collision that can occur when different races have to share the same living space.

One thing I attempted to explore was how a family man such as Richard could be so loving, yet so racist. I also hoped to point out the difference between sharing a section of city with the rejects of society (what Richard does) and sharing a bond of friendship with them (Ben's response). As Canada becomes increasingly multicultural, these are issues we may have to wrestle with more."

“Reach, Please Reach”

GREG HIEBERT is a Third Year History Honours Major. He writes:

“Community is about shared experiences. The depravity of the human condition is one such thing that transcends all cultures, times and hearts. We can all reflect together and perhaps come to different explanations for this shared experience, make excuses for it and ultimately decide to join or reject the community created by our redemption found in the cross.”

Red blotches of dying suns fill
Skies of tears found in eyes
With hope whispered only in secret
Grim faces mark numbered graves
Across the expanse of night
Never to end until light seeps in
Grasping hands holding unkempt
Children against the helplessness
Of crying against labours deserved
To the abyss go the unlisted but
Not those found in the book
Narrow trail past open sores
Of past wounds, death provided
Perpendicular splinters of
Salvation found on an empty hill
The yawning tomb to the throne’s right hand

a clean sweep

you said it was
just a train ride
i believed you
though i was scared
my hands clung to your skirt
what was left of it
it was hard to stand
hard to breathe
the air was full of something
full of people full of
fear and sickness
but mostly hunger
desperation
the train was full
and we were empty
here the gates were tall
arbeit macht frei
The doors opened
my hands were torn
from your side
what was left of it
herded like cattle
i went left
a red cottage ahead
where they said
we could take a shower

“With regards to the Jewish question, the Führer decided to make a clean sweep.”

Joseph Goebbels,
Reich Chancellor

pea soup
i remember it
sometimes clearly
we were on a boat once
a november afternoon
the fog you said
was as thick as
peanut butter but
to me it was pea soup
slopping over the sides
clouding the water
which lifted rapidly
out of the mix
and tossed us like
some kind of chaos
some kind of salad
and smartly you
slipped into the dim
and choked
the peanut butter
the soup
the fog
was spread too thick

LAURA SPOELSTRA is a first year English and Theatre major.

She writes:

“This first poem, entitled a clean sweep, is about the Holocaust, seen through the eyes of a child entering a concentration camp at their mother’s side. The child’s whole view of things has been shaped by their innocence, as well as their mother’s attempts to protect them. It attempts to reflect the horror and suffering that the Jewish people were forced to go through, which ties in to the idea of identity. Without a doubt, the Holocaust will always be a part of the Jewish identity.”

My inspiration for the poem pea soup came from the classic 1964 Rudolph movie. There’s a scene where two of the characters are floating in the sea, arguing over whether the fog was as thick as peanut butter, or pea soup. The poem that came out of that is in essence a reflection on an event that happened in the past, but has started to become fragmented and mixed with other memories, which often happens with childhood memories.”

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